The Believer's Present Rest

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"We who have believed do enter into rest." Hebrews 4:3.

[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same text are Sermons #866, Volume 15—REST and #2090, Volume 35— A DELICIOUS EXPERIENCE.]

THE text does not say that we who have believed shall enter into rest. That is a very great Truth, but it is not the Truth that is taught here. We "do enter into rest," even in this present life! All who are Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are already enjoying rest of heart and, in proportion as faith possesses their souls, in that proportion they enjoy perfect rest. It is not a future privilege—it is a matter of present enjoyment. And I pray my Brothers and Sisters in Christ not to impoverish themselves by making the text apply to the future, but to seek for the spiritual enrichment which God has given them by accepting the text just as the Apostle wrote it and so realizing that "we who have believed do enter into

rest."

It appears from the connection in which these words appear that the type and pattern of all true rest for men was the rest of God at the end of the six days of Creation. After He had worked so wondrously and finished all His creative work, we read that the Lord "rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made." It is not easy for us to understand how the rest of God could ever have been broken, yet there must have been a deeper kind of rest for Him on that seventh day than during the previous six days, for it is expressly said that God did rest then. Into that great mysterious deep we will not try to plunge, but we know that the Lord was pleased, then, to institute the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of His own rest and that Sabbath was to be observed by all men—and especially by all the Lord's own people in perpetuity, as if, I think, He would not only commemorate His own rest, but would also indicate that He intended men to be partakers of it.

God's grand ideal of man's happiness was that he could not only work, but that he should also rest. What a wonderful restfulness there seems to be in every part of Creation into which man does not come! Go into any part of the country where man is and there you find the plow cutting into the earth and the ox and the donkey and the horse toiling—and you meet with men and women in sickness and poverty and need. But get away into the woods, traverse the wilds of Nature and see how restful everything is there! Note how the birds seem to have little else to do but to sing God's praises. Mark how the very brooks warble as they flow and how all Creation that is untouched by man appears to delight in a deep profound calm and

peace! Had there been no Fall, the world would have been all restful—there would have been no thorns or thistles to vex and wound and add to man's labor—and no need for us to be always asking for fresh water power and steam power with which to alleviate the burden of the toil ofman. Sweat from a weary brow, or the throbbing of a tired brain would have been altogether unknown! Earth would have kept her Sabbath even as God kept His. But sin has come into the world and from that blessed state of rest, man has fallen! Yet God is bringing us back to a rest similar to that—and all who have believed in Jesus have been brought into it. The Sabbath is to them the Divine memorial of God's rest, the type of their own and also a continual reminder of the spiritual rest which they have found in Christ!

There is another type of rest given us in the Word, namely that of the children of Israel entering into the promised land. "If Jesus (that is, Joshua), had given them rest," says the Apostle, "then would he not afterward have spoken of another day." All the while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they were constantly moving to and fro, dwelling in tents and enjoying but little comfort. Notwithstanding all the blessings with which God enriched them in the wil-

derness, it wasa wilderness, and Moses truly called it, "the waste howling wilderness." They had no rest there and they were always looking forward to the land flowing with milk and honey to where they were journeying. Their eager longing was for a land where they could settle down, build houses, plant vineyards and dwell in quiet resting places. Canaan is, therefore, the type of the rest which God intends to give His people here. It is not the type of Heaven, except very imperfectly, for in Canaan there were Canaanites to be fought and to be gradually driven out. And there were some that were never driven out. But we thank God that there are no Canaanites to trouble the saints in Heaven. Canaan is the true pattern and type of the Believer's condition upon the earth We who have believed in Jesus have crossed the Jordan. He has divided it for us and we have entered into rest. It is true that the Canaanites are still in the land, but the Lord also is in the land and, by His Grace, we shall surely drive them all out. We ought not to say that we hope to reach Canaan's peaceful shore, by-and-by—we are on it now! If we have truly believed in Jesus, our condition is rightly typified by the Israelites in Canaan who had obtained their inheritance, for Jesus has obtained His inheritance and God "has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

I. The gist of what I have been endeavoring to say to you is that there is a rest which belongs to all Believers now! And if they are living as they should live, they are in the enjoyment of it. I shall try, first, to DESCRIBE THIS REST FROM THE FAMOUS TYPE WHICH IS GIVEN OF THE REST OF GOD.

That rest of God, at the end of the six days of Creation, was like the rest which the Believer enjoys, for it spoke of a work that was finished. I need not refresh your memory with the familiar story of the Creation—how the darkness had been divided from the light, how

the waters above the firmament had been separated from the waters below the firmament, how the living creatures had begun to swarm in the deeps and how, with rapid wing, the fowls of Heaven were cleaving the air. I need not detail to you the springing up of the herb yielding seed after its kind, of the tree yielding fruit after its kind, the creation of cattle, of creeping things, of the beasts of the earth and of man, the masterpiece of God. And you know that when the sun set on the sixth day, God had finished all His work—there remained nothing to be completed. He had placed in the world all the creatures that were necessary to make up the complete circle of existence! There was no deficiency in any one, neither was there a lack of any one. The whole work of Creation was finished and, therefore, God rested—He had other work to do—but from that particular work He rested and kept the Sabbath.

Now, can a Christian ever come to that condition? Yes, that is the true condition of every Christian. He sees the work of his own salvation complete—has he done it himself? Oh, no! If he had attempted to do it, he would have failed, and if any part of it had depended upon him, it would never have been accomplished. But the moment a sinner believes in Jesus, if he has been rightly instructed, he hears ringing from the Cross of Calvary that gladsome sentence, "It is finished!" And he knows that the Atonement is perfect, that the necessary justifying righteousness is completed, that every Covenant blessing is secured and guaranteed to him—and that all that was needed in order to lift the sinner from the very gates of Hell up to the Throne of God has been already worked out and brought in by the great Redeemer, the Incarnate Word of God! The worlds were framed by the Word of God and by that same Word of God men are saved. By that Word the darkness fled and life came and light—and by that same Word the darkness of our ruin has been dispelled and the light and life of our salvation have come to us! Beloved Believer, remember that you are not partlysaved, but you are wholly saved! The robe you wear today does not reach part of the way to cover you, but covers you from head to foot! The washing which the Savior has given you has not washed away a part of your spots, but you are clean every whit! And looking upon the work of your salvation as you receive it from the hands of Jesus, you may rest as God rested and keep a long and blessed Sabbath just as God has kept it! He rested because His creative work was finished—and you may rest because the work of your salvation is also finished!

Another reason why God rested on the seventh day was that not only was the work finished, but all that was finished was good. We read that at the conclusion of His six days work, "God saw everything that He had made and, behold, it was very good." And, therefore, He rested. And oh, what rest a Believer gets when he looks on the finished work of Jesus Christ! And after examining every part of it, he is able to say of it all, "It is very good." To see Christ's work of covering sin and to note how His substitutionary Sacrifice has covered it so completely that even God Himself cannot see it, is indeed, "very good." To realize that Christ has sunk our sins into oblivion and made them cease to be—this also is, "very good."

To look at Christ's justifying righteousness and to mark how perfect it is—not a thread missing, no part of the goodly texture having a flaw in it—this, too, is, "very good." To see Christ as our Prophet, Priest and King. To view

Him in all His relationships and offices—this, too, is, "very good." Yes, Beloved, this is the way to get the Sabbatis-mos—the true rest which remains for the people of God! If we examine the work of Christ, both in its completeness and in all its details, as God the Father looked at His works and praised them all—if we let our judgment feel what a strong Rock we have on which to build our eternal peace—then, like the ever-blessed Jehovah, Himself, we shall rest and enter into His rest. Oh, that God would, by His Grace, enable us to do so!

But, on further thinking this subject over, you will remember that God's great rest was not only connected with a work that was finished and a work that was in all respects good, but that it was also very closely connected with His holiness, for "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." And He has said to us, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." I speak with the utmost reverence and trembling before the Divine Majesty, yet I can truly say that there could have been no real rest even to God, Himself, if it had been conceivable that He could have been unholy. Perfect restfulness necessitates perfect holiness! Sin, which is inconceivable in connection with God, is inconceivable in connection with real rest. Hence, Beloved, to make a true Sabbath, there must be a sanctifying of the day—it must be a holy day if it is to be a restful day! It is no use for men to say that they can get a rest by spending the Sabbath in amusement—they never will. There is no perfect rest to our entire manhood except in holiness and holy exercises, alone, can give complete rest to our whole being. Let us always remember this and pant after holiness. Heaven and holiness are twin sisters. As God makes you holy, He will make you happy—and when He has made you perfectly holy, you shall he perfectly happy! No waves of sorrow will ever come where there are no waves of sin. When you have done with sinning, you shall have done with sorrowing—

"There is sweet rest in Heaven; there is sweet rest in Heaven"—

but it is because there is a blessed absence of all the sin which must forever mar our peace and restfulness!

II. Now, secondly, I am going to DESCRIBE THIS REST FROM MY OWN EXPERIENCE AND FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S PEOPLE GENERALLY. "We who have believed do enter into rest."

First, we enter into rest concerning all dread of God and all terror on account of past sin. It is but a little while ago that our sins greatly alarmed us. We knew that God must punish us for them and, therefore, we could not rest. But those sins, which then disturbed us, have been forgiven—we are reconciled to God by the death of His Son—and now, we who have believed, have no dread of punishment, no fear of the wrath to come, for we have entered into rest! I can truly say that this is my condition. Is it not yours, also, my beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ? If you really believe in Jesus, it must be!

Next, we enter into rest concerning all fears as to the future. As to any trouble we may have in this life, we know that God will overrule it for our good. As to the pangs of death, we know that the Lord will be with us and will sustain us in the valley of death-shade and we have no fear of anything that may follow after death, for what can hurt or disturb those of whom Christ has said, "Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My Glory"? We are delivered from all fear of judgment, for who shall condemn those whom God has justified, and whom He will glorify? All dread as to our past sin is gone from us forever! Concerning past sin, our soul is even as a new-born child—we are cleansed from it by the precious blood of Jesus! And as for the future, we have no more dread about it than the angels in Heaven have! They know that nothing can ever harm them, for they are God's own chosen ones—and so are we if we are Believers in Jesus Christ.

We also now have rest from all our former sinful works. Once we were the slaves of our own evil passions and we were hurried here and there to degrading service by Satan and the lusts of the flesh. But now that the Son of God has made us free, we are free indeed! We find a joyous liberty in the ways of holiness and it is our constant delight to do the will of God. Thrice happy are we who have broken the bonds of sin and are no longer the servants of iniquity. And we are equally free from all servile works for self-salvation. Oh, I pity those poor people who are working to save themselves— those who go to church or chapel and who are kept from this offense, or urged to that other apparent excellence simply because they hope for a reward thereby! Sons of Hagar, Ishmaelite children of the bondwoman, you can never be inheritors of the rest which is the birthright of Isaac and all the children of the freewoman! You must be cast out even as Ha-gar's son was. But the man who believes in Jesus knows that he is saved, so he has no need to try to save himself. That work is done and done forever! And now we work from life, not for l ife! Now we work because we are saved, not in order to be saved!Now we feel that we have not to win any merit by anything that we do, but that the Infinite Merit of Christ has already procured for us full acceptance with God. And what we have to do now is to prove our gratitude to God for the Divine work that is already completed. What a blessed thing it is to rest both from the sinful service of Satan and from the servile service of the Law!

I trust that many Believers here can say that they have now come to rest from all ambitious, discontented works. The worldly man is never satisfied—he always wants to be greater, wiser, richer and more highly esteemed than he is. But he who truly believes in Jesus feels that God may do as He likes with him. If I am little, I thank God that He has many little ones whom He greatly loves. And if He makes me great, I thank Him because He will give me Grace to bear my greatness with becoming humility. If I am poor, I will bless the Lord that He has promised that at least bread and water shall be given to those who trust Him. If He makes me rich, I will ask Him to give me the Grace to use my substance for His

Glory. It is a blessed thing to come to such a pass as this about all worldly things and leave the disposal of all of them with God.

Some people are always fretting and fuming. They appear to have been born in stormy weather and to be perpetually agitated in mind so that they cannot rest. Only the other day, a gardener I knew of was complaining greatly of the heavy rain which had done some damage to the garden where he was working. A Quaker, who stood by, said to him, "Friend, you ought not to complain of the rain, for if it has not done this garden any good, it has done good to the fields of many of your neighbors. Therefore you ought to be glad on their account and to thank God." And then the good man very wisely added, "I do not think that, after all, we would have the weather any better managed by you than it is by God, if it could be put into your hands." That is the right way to look at all things—they are far better ordered by God than by any man! Christian, you could not order them better if you had the ordering of them, so be perfectly content and say, "Not my will, Lord, but Yours be done." The more faith grows, the more rest grows. But when our faith begins to forget the Lord and we commence to worry and to fret, then our rest goes at once. It is glorious to live exempt from care by the blessed power of prayer—to be able to take every trouble to God and leave it with Him. I know what it means to do so for I have sometimes had a church trouble or a household trouble and I have done my best with it—but bad has been my best and, at last, I have taken it to my God and I have said to Him—"Lord, I will not worry myself about that trouble anymore. I leave it with You—do what You please with it." And I have always found that the tangle has been unraveled when I have done that with it! There would always be a way found for us out of every trouble if we would trust wholly in God and not rely upon ourselves or our fellows!

"We who have believed do enter into rest." I have already incidentally shown you that the rest of the Christian depends upon his believing, but I want just now to emphasize that fact. It is not as a doer that you will get rest, but as a Believer! It is not as a professor, it is not as anything else except as a Believer that you will obtain rest of heart. My Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I beseech you to hold fast your faith. There are many things that will tempt you to live by your experience, to live by your feelings and to live by your graces and your attainments—but remember that sentence that is again and again repeated in Scripture, "The just shall live by faith." Be like poor Jack the Huckster, whose one saying was—

"I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all, But Jesus Christ is my All-in-All."

Do not go an inch beyond that declaration—

"I the chief of sinners am, But Jesus died for me."

The moment you go beyond that, you may get some temporary excitement, as they do who profess to be perfect and who, in these modern days, are reviving old-fashioned heresies by professing that they are perfectly sanctified, which I venture to say they are not! You may get a delirious joy for a time, but it will evaporate before long. But keeping close to the Cross

is the thing for me! I remember an old countryman saying to me, long ago, "Depend upon it, my Brother, if you or I get one inch above the ground, we get just that inch too high." And I believe it is so. Flat on our faces before the Cross of Christ is the place for us—realizing that we are nothing and that Jesus Christ is everything!

"We who have believeddo enter into rest." Not we who have fltthis or that. Not we who thinkwe are somebodies. But we who know that we are nobodies and hang alone upon Christ! I suppose there never was a more restful period to any of us than when we lay in our mother's bosom and just drank in our life's nourishment from her. And there is never such a restful period to any child of God as when he is just a little babe, hanging on the bosom of his God and drinking in

all he needs from the eternal fountains of Divine Love and Life! Oh, to be always such a blessed babe as that, relying upon my God for all the strength I need! Then may I utter Paul's paradox, "When I am weak, then am I strong." Though I am a fool, God is my Wisdom! Though I am nothing at all, God is my All-in-All. This is the way to enter into rest through believing!

Now, lastly, let me remind you, Beloved, that this rest is perfectly consistent with labor. In verse 11 the Apostle says, "Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest." It is an extraordinary injunction, but I think he means, let us labor not to labor. Our tendency is to try to do somethingin order to save ourselves. But we must beat that tendency down and look away from self to Christ. Labor to get away from your own labors! Labor to be clean rid of all self-reliance! Labor in your prayers never to depend upon your prayers! Labor in your repentance never to rest upon your repentance and labor in your faith not to trust to your faith, but to trust only to Jesus! When you begin to rest upon your repentance and forget the Savior, away with your repentance! And when you begin to pray and you depend upon your prayers and forget the Lord Jesus, away with your prayers! When you think you are beginning to grow in Grace and you feel, "Now I am somebody," away with such spurious growth as that, for you are only being puffed up with pride and not really growing at all! Labor not to labor. Labor to keep down your natural self-righteousness and self-reliance. Labor to continue where the publican was and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Labor to get where Mary was, sitting at the Master's feet and learning of Him. Labor not to grow upward in self-esteem, but to grow downward in humiliation— growing continually less and less, and less in your own estimation—and always crowning Christ Lord of All!

Labor also to show your gratitude to God for what He has done for you, and then labor to show your love to men. You must not suppose that when we enter into rest, it means that we are idle. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, "My Father works up to now, and I work." God rests, yet He works. Heaven is a place of rest, but it is not a place of idleness—there is still holy service to be done there, so you Christian people who are perfectly saved, devote all your strength to the winning of others for Christ! Show your love to Jesus by trying to find some

of His lost sheep for Him. Awaken yourselves, my Brothers and Sisters who have entered into rest, and prove to mankind that the grand old Calvinistic Doctrine of a finished salvation does not breed sluggishness! Rise, I pray you, and show that the children of the freewoman are not slothful, but that the motive of gratitude to God is a higher and more potent one than the selfish motive of seeking to save yourselves! Let those who want to save themselves go and work for themselves, but as for you who are saved, go and work for Jesus! And let your deeds of holy heroism prove that you are constrained by love to Him to do all that you can to bring others to trust in Him! Now, as some of you are coming to this Communion Table, may it prove to be a feast of rest to your souls! Sitting, as you will be, in the posture of rest, eating the bread and drinking the wine which are the tokens of the finished work of Christ, may you have real rest in Him! And oh, that some poor sinner who has never believed in Jesus, may do so now, for thus shall he find rest unto his soul! The Lord grant it, for Jesus sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: 2 CORINTHIANS 4.

Verse 1. Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not It is a very high privilege to be called to the work of the Christian ministry. And when the minister remembers what great mercy he has, himself, received, what sins have been forgiven, what favors have been bestowed—he has the very best incentives in all the world to pursue his ministry with diligence and with zeal. "We faint not," says the Apostle. We do not hang our harps upon the willows. We do not pray to be allowed to retire from the battle and give up the strife, but feeling how great has been the mercy of God to our own souls, we are stirred up to press forward with holy zeal to win the victory! We long that others may taste of the same good things on which we have feasted.

2. But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the Truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. There have, alas, been many preachers who have handled the Word of God in the manner described by the Apostle. They have cut and trimmed the Truth in order to please their generation—they have kept back this, or have made unduly prominent that, instead of giving all the Truth of God its proper and proportionate prominence in their ministry. But such men have not, after all, won the respect of their hearers. There is an old story told of King John of England that when he was closely pressed by the barons, he wrote to the Emperor of Morocco and offered to turn Muslim and take an oath of allegiance to him if he would send an army to help him. And it is said that ever after the Emperor of Morocco abhorred and detested the very name of John, for he said he must be an abominable miscreant to be willing to change his religion for the sake of gain! Ah, my Brothers, we never gain any respect, even from the world, by seeking after it in this fashion! Be thoroughly honest, especially you who are in the Christian

ministry. Be outspoken, blunt and plain—and then, even if men's prejudices condemn you, their consciences will commend you for speaking what you believe to be the Truth of God.

3, 4. But if our Gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

[The following Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon parts of these two verses, are #2304, Volume 39—BLINDED BY SATAN; #2077, Volume 35—THE GOSPEL OF THE GLORY OF CHRIST and #1663, Volume 28—THE TRUE GOSPEL IS NO HIDDEN GOSPEL.]

Without light from above, no man can perceive the beauties either of the Gospel or of Christ Himself. Until God the Holy Spirit sheds a spiritual light upon the Person, offices and work of Christ, men grope in the dark as blind men do. They see not the Truth of God. They are not persuaded of its excellence. Our ministry is to them a veiled ministry, they do not comprehend it. Let those who receive not the Gospel see what a miserable state theirs is—they are blinded by "the god of this world." He has such supremacy over their intellects that he has utterly perverted and ruined them!

5. For we preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. Hence we learn that anything like priestcraft is altogether foreign to the Bible. The "priest" preaches up himself, the extraordinary value of his ordination, the occult influences which flow from his touch, the mysterious power which dwells in baptismal water and in "consecrated" wafers and poured-out wine. This is preaching themselves with a vengeance! But Christ's Apostles preached not themselves—they preached up Christ and Him crucified. Paul wrote, "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." And this was the constant theme of all the Apostles. If they mentioned themselves at all, they simply said, as Paul does here, "Ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

6. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. [See Sermon #1493, Volume 25—the glory of god in the face of jesus chrIST.] There is the very Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,

for He is, "very God of very God," and he who will but think of the wondrous mystery of the Incarnate Deity and the simple but marvelous plan of salvation through Christ's atoning Sacrifice will see infinitely more Glory, there, than in all God's works in Creation or Providence. Well does Watts say—

"The spacious earth and spreading flood
Proclaim the wise and powerful God!
And Your rich glories from afar
Sparkle in every rolling star.
But in Christ's looks a Glory stands,
The noblest labor of Your hands,

The pleasing luster of His eyes
Outshines the wonders of the skies."

7. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. The original might very fairly be rendered, "We have this treasure in oyster shells," for, just as pearls are found in the shells of oysters, so God gives to those who preach the Word, the treasure of the Gospel, yet they are themselves nothing but the oyster shells, nothing but the earthen vessel in which God pleases to place His priceless treasures. If you have done anything in the service of God, my Brother, remember that you are nothing but the oyster shell—it is God's Truth that is the pearl in you! So while you are thankful for the honor that He puts upon you, mind that you give Him all the glory. It is well to take the right view of our own imperfections and infirmities, as Paul did when he wrote, "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." The infirmity of the creature leaves more room for the display of the greatness of the Creator, for if God can work such wondrous results by using such poor tools as we are, how great must be His power and skill!

8. 9. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed. We are perplexed but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed"We are troubled on every side." There seems to be an allusion here to the Greek wrestling games. Sometimes in wrestling, a man would be gripped by his adversary so that he could scarcely move hand

or foot, yet bravely says the Apostle, "We are not distressed," or, as the original seems to suggest, "We still have a plan of overcoming our adversaries. Though they seem to have got us entirely in their power, there is still something that we can do to obtain our release." And he goes even further than that, for he says, "We are perplexed"—it seemed as if there was nothing that he could do, yet he added, "but not in despair"—"not altogether without help," as the marginal reading renders it—for when he could do nothing, God could do everything! The death of creature-strength is the birth of Omnipotent Might!

"Persecuted, but not forsaken"—having no man's face to smile upon him, but still rejoicing in the light of God's Countenance. "Cast down"—as if his antagonist had thrown him and he had fallen heavily upon the ground. Yet he says, as he springs up again, "Cast down, but not destroyed." Many a time the Christian wrestler is thrown by his foe, but he never has a final fall. As Paul, when he was stoned at Lystra and left for dead, rose up again, and soon went on with his work, so the Christian, when he has been cast down by trouble, often seems to gain new life and vigor—and to go on to serve his Master even better than he did before!

10. Always bearing about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our bod. The Apostles were always ready to die for Christ and, therefore, they were enabled to live so much like Christ—imitating His life and being prepared to follow Him even to the death whenever He called them to do so.

11-14. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death works in us, but life in you. We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and, therefore, have I spoken; we also believe and, therefore, speak knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise us up also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. There is no possibility of serving God well, especially under great trials and persecutions, without a deeply-rooted confidence in the Truth of His Gospel. Once have a doubt concerning that and the strong sinews of our spiritual manhood are cut! Once begin to question the evidences of our holy religion and you cannot henceforth serve God as you did before! Oh, to be strengthened every day with might in the inner man—to feel that in our own experience we have continually fresh proofs of the Truth of the Gospel and that, whether we have trials or delights, we are thereby the more firmly rooted in faith, even as the trees are rooted both by the March winds and the April showers—and so rooted in faith that we grow into it and cannot be separated from it because it has become a part of ourselves! Religion is nothing to any of you unless it is woven into the very warp and woof of your being—it must go right into your very soul and become a vital part of you, or else you have never received it in Truth!

15, 16. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant Grace might through the thanksgiving ofmany redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perishes, yet the inward man is renewed day by da}. The sickness that crumbles away the body of a Christian often confirms his soul in the faith that he received when he was strong and well. Some of the healthiest hours that God's people ever have are the hours of their sorest sicknesses. God often sends His people fevers to make them well. He sends them losses to make them rich. He takes away their earthly friends to bring them closer to their Best Friend and He brings them to their wits' end that they may begin to be truly wise! Often, when God strips us of all our worldly possessions, it is the most soul-enriching season we have ever known! But, on the other hand, the day of temporal prosperity has often been a day of spiritual poverty. Adversity has many a time been an angel in disguise, but prosperity has been the devil in a mask! Let us take care that we cleave closely to Christ under both experiences, for then both of them shall be sanctified to us.

17. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Notice the antithesis here. "Light affliction"—a "weight of glory." "Affliction" is not set in contrast with peace, or freedom from affliction, but with "glory." The "light affliction" is "for a moment"—the "weight of glory" is "eternal." And then, as if this were not enough, the Apostle has to exhaust all ordinary powers of speech in order to adequately express the contrast between the, "light affliction" and the, "weight of glory." It is "far more exceeding"—not only a soul brim-full of bliss and overflowing, but far more than that if there can be such a thing—"a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

18. While we look not at the things which are seei.. Alas for us if we did!

18. But at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal Temporal and temporary! See how they melt away, one after another!

18. But the things which are not seen are eternal. [See Sermon #1380, Volume 23—VANITIES AND VERITIES.] The substance is beyond the river. The shadows are here. God help us to look for the substance and to claim it as our own—and let none of us try to grasp the shadows which would be worthless if we could ever hold them in our hands!